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**Biological Weapons Convention  
Meeting of States Parties  
NGO Statements  
9-13 December 2013**



Madame Chair:

The University of London\* greatly appreciates the opportunity to address the States Parties to the Convention.

This meeting marks the end of the CBM discussion for this intersessional cycle. One of the key substantive topics that has been raised in the discussion concerned the future evolution of the CBM regime: How can it be adapted to today's political, security and scientific contexts?

The underlying purpose of the CBMs has traditionally been seen to be about reducing the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions. Our view is that this underlying purpose remains essential to the health of the Convention. However, to give effect to that traditional purpose in present-day conditions requires a new, expanded understanding of what builds confidence. Confidence building in the biological field today must also be about setting appropriate examples for others to emulate.

Here's why: The traditional "artefact-centric" approach to regulating unconventional weapons – which seeks to control the materials, methods and products involved in misuse – is becoming ever-more ill-suited to the life sciences, where the technologies are less about hardware, equipment and tools, and more about people, processes and know-how. Dual-use, or multi-use, life science technologies are increasingly diffuse, globalised and multidisciplinary and are often based on intangible information rather than on specialised materials and equipment. This changes the definition of the problem from a material- and equipment-based threat that can be eliminated to a knowledge-based risk that must be managed.

Risk-based regulation involves a plurality of public and private actors, instruments and purposes that can be grouped into three modes of governance: "hard law", "soft law" and "informal law":

- "Hard-law" is based on the authority of the state and accompanied by penalties for noncompliance; it includes statutory regulations, reporting requirements, and mandatory licensing, certification and registration.
- "Soft-law" is less formal and based on conceptions of what is socially desirable; it includes professional self-governance, codes of practice, and guidelines.
- "Informal law" involves the emulation of successful practices and models of behaviour; it includes national and international standards, education and awareness-raising.

All three modes of governance play important roles in influencing, identifying and inhibiting those who seek to misuse the life sciences. Truly effective management of the knowledge-based risk posed by dual-use life science technologies must therefore couple hard-law with both soft-law and informal law.

So in addition to national implementation of the BWC, it is important that governments support bottom-up codes of practice initiatives; education, outreach and

awareness-raising initiatives; and so on. But, at the same time, governments also have to act as the ultimate role model. Governments have to look inward at themselves and demonstrate outward to others that their own house is in order.

And this is where the CBMs of the BWC come in.

The process of collecting and submitting information for CBM submissions provides a mechanism for individual governments to draw domestic stakeholders together, to focus internal inter-agency or inter-departmental coordination, and to increase their awareness and oversight of relevant national biological activity.

Complete, accurate and annual CBM submissions demonstrate to your peers in government and to peers in other governments that you have your house in order. And for the growing number of States Parties who choose to maximise transparency and make their CBMs publicly available, you also demonstrate that you have your house in order to other – equally significant – stakeholders in managing the risks that biology may be misused.

We strongly encourage States Parties, in their preparations for the next Review Conference, to make explicit their understanding of what builds confidence and what expansion this requires in giving effect to the traditional purpose of CBMs in present-day conditions. We hope they will also say how they see the CBM regime evolving in the future.

Madame Chair, before we conclude, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the work you've done this year, especially your efforts to bring in more voices. The future of biological disarmament and non-proliferation lies in outreach to the ever-growing number of stakeholders and in effective links and partnerships between governments, civil society, national and international scientific and medical associations, and industry. Your efforts, Madam Chair, to broaden the active participation of both states and others, like ourselves, in the formal meetings is an important part of fostering and benefiting from the multi-level stakeholdership crucial to managing biological threats today.

We wish you all a productive week, and look forward to continuing our engagement with you on CBMs and on other BWC-related issues.

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\* The University of London dates from 1836, and is a major component of the higher education sector in the United Kingdom and beyond. It has evolved into a confederation of academically and financially autonomous colleges, which continue to share some central University of London institutions and a long history of joint endeavours in education and research. King's College London (founded 1829) was one of the two original colleges of the University of London. The London School of Economics & Political Science (founded 1895) became a college of the University of London in 1900.